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Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 FEA-02 INT-08 TRSE-00 CIEP-02

SS-20 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15 AGR-20 NSC-10 OMB-01 CEA-02

COME-00 SAM-01 SPC-03 L-03 H-03 SCI-06 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 DRC-01 /150 W
---------- 096853
R 072305Z FEB 74
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2694

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POUCHED ALL CONGENS IN CANADA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ENRG, CA
SUBJECT: ENERGY: MONTREAL PIPELINE

1. FOR PAST SEVERAL WEEKS THERE HAVE BEEN SPORADIC PRESS STORIES TO EFFECT THAT SOUTHERN ONTARIO FARMERS AND OTHER LAND-OWNERS WOULD OPPOSE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SARNIA-MONTREAL PIPELINE.

2. CANADIAN PRESS OF FEBRUARY 7 GIVES PROMINENCE TO REPORTED WARNING BY FEDERAL MANPOWER MINISTER ANDRAS THAT IN FACE OF SUCH OPPOSITION AND POTENTIALLY LENGTHY LEGAL BATTLES, GOC MAY HAVE TO ABANDON PROPOSED ROUTE IN FAVOR OF NORTHERN ROUTE, RESULTING IN DELAY OF COMPLETION DATE BY TWO YEARS AND AT COST OF ADDITIONAL $100 MILLION.

3. PRESS ALSO REPORTS THAT THREE ONTARIO CABINET MINISTERS (TREASURY, AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES) HAVE COME OUT STRONGLY AGAINST THE SARNIA-MONTREAL ROUTE, WITH PROVINCIAL AGRICULTURE MINISTER CLAIMING SOUTHERN ROUTE WOULD CONDEMN 10,000 ACRES OF FARMLAND TO 20-YEAR CROP
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DISRUPTION (FEDERAL OFFICIALS SAY ONLY 1,000 ACRES WOULD

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BE AFFECTED AND WITHOUT HARM TO FUTURE CROPS, WHILE INTERPROVINCIAL PIPELINE CO. (IPC) OFFICIALS USE A FIGURE OF 1,300 ACRES).

4. FEBRUARY 7 OTTAWA JOURNAL REPORTS THAT THOUSANDS OF LANDOWNERS WILL NOT LIKELY KNOW EXACT ROUTE OF PIPELINE UNTIL SEVERAL MONTHS AFTER IPC SUBMITS ITS FORMAL PIPE-LINE APPLICATION TO NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD (NEB) IN MARCH. THE MARCH APPLICATION NEED ONLY CONTAIN GENERAL ROUTE PLAN TO ALLOW NEB TO COMMENCE CONSIDERATION OF THE PROJECT. SUBMISSION OF DETAILED ROUTE, HOWEVER, IS NECESSARY PRIOR TO COMMENCEMENT OF ACTUAL CONSTRUCTION. JOURNAL STORY SUGGESTS, THEREFORE, THAT NEB MAY HAVE TO EITHER DELAY ENTIRE HEARING PROCESS OR SCHEDULE SECOND ROUND OF PUBLIC HEARINGS, A PROCESS THAT COULD CONSIDER-ABLY DELAY THE PROJECT BEYOND GOC EXPECTATIONS.

5. LOU COMMENT: EMBOFF HAS HEARD GENERALLY KNOWLEDGE-ABLE OBSERVERS SUGGEST THAT WHAT APPEARS TO BE RISING ONTARIO OPPOSITION TO THE PIPELINE CAUSES NO REPEAT NO GRIEF TO IPC WHICH HAS NEVER BEEN KEEN ON THIS PROJECT WHICH THE GOC HAS IMPOSED ON THE COMPANY. JOHNSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONSTRUCTION, PETROLEUM PIPELINES, SARNIA-MONTREAL PIPELINE, AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 FEB 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974OTTAWA00391
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: OTTAWA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740249/aaaabtqm.tel
Line Count: 84
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 APR 2002 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <03 JUN 2002 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

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Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ENERGY: MONTREAL PIPELINE
TAGS: ENRG, CA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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